

DATE DUE

ENGLISH VERSE
OLD AND NEW

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ENGLISH VERSE

OLD AND NEW

(Parts I & II)

AN ANTHOLOGY FOR SCHOOLS

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AND

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TO
SIR ARTHUR T. QUILLER-COUCH
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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PREFACE TO COMPLETE EDITION

THE compilation of a school anthology, in which the old and the new are boldly associated on an original plan, demands, perhaps, a word of explanation.

We believe that a feeling for poetry is best imparted by stimulating an interest in contemporary work; that this interest should be made to lead to an appreciation of the finest poetry of earlier periods; and that every care should be taken that the poetry of "modern anthologies" should not be regarded as something distinct from that of the standard "repetition books" generally used.

Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, by use the most hallowed of all anthologies, seems to us too massive for our purpose, and, claiming to be representative of English Lyrical Poetry, to include much that we would not wish to present to a boy, as rightly for the moment beyond his range. Yet it will be clear from what we have included that we do not mean to make his way too easy or to narrow his vision.

This anthology, then, is based on a conviction that there is need for a collection of poems of direct appeal drawn from ancient as well as modern sources, between the covers of a single book. We have deliberately given a disproportionate space to living poets, not because we wish to exalt the moderns above the ancients, but because we believe that the best way of stimulating an interest

PREFACE

in poetry is to show that it is a thing of life and power in our own day.

The material is grouped in five parts. The order of time is disregarded, on the ground that a perception of the common element in English poetry is of greater value than a knowledge of its chronological sequence. With the same principle in view, an attempt is made to arrange the poems so that the reader is led from the simpler poems of immediate appeal to the more profound work. Except where the author is still living, the dates of his birth and death are attached.

Our thanks are due to the following authors and literary executors for their kindness in permitting us to reprint copyright work:

Mrs Allingham (for *The Fairies* by the late William Allingham), Mr Martin Armstrong, Mr Hilaire Belloc, Mr W. S. Blunt, the Poet Laureate, Mr A. Y. Campbell, Mr G. K. Chesterton, Mrs Henry Cust (for *Non Nobis* by the late Henry Cust), Mr Walter de la Mare, Messrs P. J. and A. E. Dobell and Mr William Reeve (for *The Vine* by James Thomson (B. V.)), Mr John Drinkwater, Mr John Freeman, Mr Robert Graves, Lord Desborough (for *Into Battle* by Julian Grenfell), Mrs Henley (for *Unconquerable* by W. E. Henley), Mrs Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Mr Ralph Hodgson, Mr A. E. Housman, Mr Rudyard Kipling, Mr Shane Leslie, Mr John Masefield, Mr Wilfred Meynell (for two poems by Francis Thompson), Mr Harold Monro, Sir Henry

PREFACE

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It is impossible to mention severally the books from which poems have been drawn, but our debt to *The Oxford Book of English Verse* of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, and to Mr J. C. Squire's *Selections from Modern Poets* should in all fairness be recorded.

Our acknowledgments to the various publishers who have assisted the book with permission to print copyright work will be found in the List of Authors.

G. C. F. MEAD
RUPERT C. CLIFT

ROUGEMONT
1922

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PART I

Off the Ground

THREE jolly Farmers
Once bet a pound
Each dance the others would
Off the ground.
Out of their coats
They slipped right soon,
And neat and nicesome
Put each his shoon.
One—Two—Three!
And away they go,
Not too fast
And not too slow;
Out from the elm-tree's
Noonday shadow,
Into the sun
And across the meadow.
Past the schoolroom,
With knees well bent,
Fingers a-flicking,
They dancing went.
Upsides and over,
And round and round;
They crossed click-clacking;
The Parish bound;
By Tupman's meadow
They did their mile,
Tee-to-tum
On a three-barred stile.
Then straight through Whipham
Downhill to Week,
Footing it lightsome

[1]

1

WALTER DE LA MARE

But not too quick,
Up fields to Watchet
And on through Wye,
Till seven fine churches
They'd seen skip by—
Seven fine churches,
And five old mills,
Farms in the valley,
And sheep on the hills;
Old Man's Acre
And Dead Man's Pool
All left behind
As they danced through Wool.
And Wool gone by
Like tops that seem
To spin in sleep
They danced in dream:
Withy—Wellover—
Wassop—Wo—
Like an old clock
Their heels did go.
A league and a league
And a league they went,
And not one weary
And not one spent.
And lo! and behold!
Past Willow-cum-Leigh
Stretched with its waters
The great green sea.
Says Farmer Bates:
"I puffs and I blows,
What's under the water
Why no man knows!"
Says Farmer Giles:
"My mind comes weak,
And a good man drowned
Is far to seek."

WALTER DE LA MARE

But Farmer Turvey,
On twirling toes,
Ups with his gaiters,
And in he goes:
Down where the mermaids
Pluck and play
On their twangling harps
In a sea-green day;
Down where the mermaids,
Finned and fair,
Sleek with their combs
Their yellow hair...
Bates and Giles
On the shingle sat,
Gazing at Turvey's
Floating hat.
But never a ripple
Nor bubble told
Where he was supping
Off plates of gold.
Never an echo
Rilled through the sea
Of the feasting and dancing
And minstrelsy.
They called—called—called:
Came no reply:
Nought but the ripples'
Sandy sigh.
Then glum and silent
They sat instead
Vacantly brooding
On home and bed,
Till both together
Stood up and said:
"Us knows not, dreams not
Where you be,
Turvey, unless

In the deep blue sea;
But excusing silver—
And it comes most willing—
Here's us two paying
Our forty shilling;
For it's sartin sure, Turvey,
Safe and sound
You danced us square, Turvey,
Off the ground!"

WALTER DE LA MARE

Time, You Old Gipsy Man

TIME, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

All things I'll give you,
Will you be my guest,
Bells for your jennet
Of silver the best,
Goldsmiths shall beat you
A great golden ring,
Peacocks shall bow to you,
Little boys sing,
Oh, and sweet girls will
Festoon you with may,
Time, you old gipsy,
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,
Last night in Rome,
Morning, and in the crush
Under Paul's dome;
Under Paul's dial
You tighten your rein—

R. HODGSON ❀ H. MONRO

Only a moment,
And off once again;
Off to some city
Now blind in the womb,
Off to another
Ere that's in the tomb.
Time, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

RALPH HODGSON

Overheard on a Saltmarsh

NYMPH, nymph, what are your beads?
Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?
Give them me.

No.

Give them me. Give them me.

No.

'Then I will howl all night in the reeds,
Lie in the mud and howl for them.
Goblin, why do you love them so?
They are better than stars or water,
Better than voices of winds that sing,
Better than any man's fair daughter,
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.
Hush, I stole them out of the moon.
Give me your beads, I want them.

No.

I will lie and howl in a deep lagoon
For your green glass beads, I love them so.
Give them me. Give them.

No.

HAROLD MONRO

Wolfram's Song

OLD Adam, the carrion crow,
The old crow of Cairo;
He sat in the shower, and let it flow
Under his tail and over his crest;
And through every feather
Leaked the wet weather;
And the bough swung under his nest;
For his beak it was heavy with marrow.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It's only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts' moonshine.

Ho! Eva, my grey carrion wife,
When we have supped on kings' marrow,
Where shall we drink and make merry our life?
Our nest it is Queen Cleopatra's skull,
'Tis cloven and cracked,
And battered and hacked,
But with tears of blue eyes it is full;
Let us drink then, my raven of Cairo.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It's only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts' moonshine.

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES
1803-1849

The Dead Knight

THE cleanly rush of the mountain air,
And the mumbling, grumbling humble-bees,
Are the only things that wander there.
The pitiful bones are laid at ease,
The grass has grown in his tangled hair,
And a rambling bramble binds his knees.

J. MASEFIELD ❀ R. GRAVES

To shrieve his soul from the pangs of hell,
The only requiem bells that rang
Were the harebell and the heather bell.
Hushed he is with the holy spell
In the gentle hymn the wind sang,
And he lies quiet, and sleeps well.

He is bleached and blanched with the summer sun;
The misty rain and the cold dew
Have altered him from the kingly one
Whom his lady loved, and his men knew,
And dwindled him to a skeleton.

The vetches have twined about his bones,
The straggling ivy twists and creeps
In his eye-sockets: the nettle keeps
Vigil about him while he sleeps.
Over his body the wind moans
With a dreary note throughout the day,
In a chorus wistful, ceric, thin
As the gulls' cry, as the cry in the bay,
The mournful word the seas say
When tides are wandering out or in.

JOHN MASEFIELD

Star-Talk

“ARE you awake, Gemelli;
This frosty night?”
“We’ll be awake till reveillé,
Which is Sunrise,” say the Gemelli;
“It’s no good trying to go to sleep:
If there’s wine to be got we’ll drink it deep;
But rest is hopeless to-night,
But rest is hopeless to-night.”

ROBERT GRAVES

"Are you cold too, poor Pleiads,
This frosty night?"

'Yes, and so are the Hyads:
See us cuddle and hug," say the Pleiads;
"All six in a ring; it keeps us warm:
We huddle together like birds in a storm:
It's bitter weather to-night,
It's bitter weather to-night."

"What do you hunt, Orion,
This starry night?"

"The Ram, the Bull and the Lion
And the Great Bear," says Orion,
"With my starry quiver and beautiful belt
I am trying to find a good thick pelt
To warm my shoulders to-night,
To warm my shoulders to-night."

"Did you hear that, Great She-bear,
This frosty night?"

"Yes, he's talking of stripping *me* bare
Of my own big fur," says the She-bear.
"I'm afraid of the man and his terrible arrow:
The thought of it chills my bones to the marrow,
And the frost so cruel to-night!
And the frost so cruel to-night!"

"How is your trade, Aquarius,
This frosty night?"

"Complaints is many and various
And my feet are cold," says Aquarius,
"There's Venus objects to Dolphin-scales,
And Mars to Crab-spawn found in my pails;
And the pump has frozen to-night,
And the pump has frozen to-night."

ROBERT GRAVES

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Kubla Khan

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless to man;
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;

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S. T. COLERIDGE ❖ W. DE LA MARE

Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me,
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there;
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772-1834

The Song of the Mad Prince

WHO said, "Peacock Pie"?
The old King to the sparrow:
Who said, "Crops are ripe"?
Rust to the harrow:
Who said, "Where sleeps she now?
Where rests she now her head,
Bathed in Eve's loveliness"?—
That's what I said.

W. DE LA MARE ❖ P. B. SHELLEY

Who said, "Ay, mum's the word"?

Sexton to willow:

Who said, "Green dust for dreams;

Moss for a pillow"?

Who said, "All Time's delight

Hath she for narrow bed;

Life's troubled bubble broken"?—

That's what I said.

WALTER DE LA MARE

The Moon

I

AND, like a dying lady lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapp'd in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky east
A white and shapeless mass.

II

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
'That finds no object worth its constancy?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

Dream-Pedlary

IF there were dreams to sell,
What would you buy?
Some cost a passing bell;
Some a light sigh,
That shakes from Life's fresh crown
Only a rose-leaf down.
If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy?

A cottage lone and still
With bowers nigh,
Shadowy, my woes to still,
Until I die.
Such pearl from Life's fresh crown
Fain would I shake me down.
Were dreams to have at will,
This would best heal my ill,
This would I buy.

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

1803-1849

Day That I Have Loved

TENDERLY, day that I have loved, I close
your eyes,
And smooth your quiet brow, and fold your thin
dead hands.
The grey veils of the half-light deepen; colour dies.
I bear you, a light burden, to the shrouded sands,

RUPERT BROOKE

Where lies your waiting boat, by wreaths of the
sea's making

Mist-garlanded, with all grey weeds of the water
crowned.

There you'll be laid, past fear of sleep or hope of
waking;

And over the unmoving sea, without a sound,

Faint hands will row you outward, out beyond our
sight,

Us with stretched arms and empty eyes on the far-
gleaming

And marble sand...

Beyond the shifting cold twilight,
Further than laughter goes, or tears, further than
dreaming,

There'll be no port, no dawn-lit islands! But the
drear

Waste darkening, and, at length, flame ultimate on
the deep.

Oh, the last fire—and you, unkissed, unfriended
there!

Oh, the lone way's red ending, and we not there
to weep!

(We found you pale and quiet, and strangely
crowned with flowers,

Lovely and secret as a child. You came with us,
Came happily, hand in hand with the young dancing
hours,

High on the downs at dawn!) Void now and tene-
brous,

The grey sands curve before me...

From the inland meadows,
Fragrant of June and clover, floats the dark and
fills

R. BROOKE ❀ J. E. FLECKER

The hollow sea's dead face with little creeping
 shadows,
And the white silence brims the hollow of the hills.

Close in the nest is folded every weary wing,
Hushed all the joyful voices, and we, who held
 you dear,
Eastward we turn and homeward, alone, re-
 membering...
Day that I loved, day that I loved, the Night is
 here!

RUPERT BROOKE

1887-1915

The Old Ships

I HAVE seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;
And all those ships were certainly so old
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,

J. E. FLECKER * J. DRINKWATER

Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that
same

(Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue—)

That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows?
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER
1884-1915

The Cotswold Farmers

SOMETIMES the ghosts forgotten go
Along the hill-top way,
And with long scythes of silver mow
Meadows of moonlit hay,
Until the cocks of Cotswold crow
The coming of the day.

There's Tony Turkletob who died
When he could drink no more,
And Uncle Heritage, the pride
Of eighteen-twenty-four,
And Ebenezer Barleytide,
And others half a score.

They fold in phantom pens, and plough
Furrows without a share,
And one will milk a faery cow,
And one will stare and stare,
And whistle ghostly tunes that now
Are not sung anywhere.

J. DRINKWATER ❀ W. DE LA MARE

The moon goes down on Oakridge lea,
The other world's astir,
The Cotswold Farmers silently
Go back to sepulchre,
The sleeping watchdogs wake, and see
No ghostly harvester.

JOHN DRINKWATER

Nod

SOFTLY along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew
Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him;
Their fleeces charged with gold,
'To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar;
From their sand the conies creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses;
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars;
"Rest, rest, and rest again."

WALTER DE LA MARE

Vespers

O BLACKBIRD, what a boy you are!
How you do go it!
Blowing your bugle to that one sweet star—
How you do blow it!
And does she hear you, blackbird boy, so far?
Or is it wasted breath?
“Good Lord! She is so bright
To-night!”
The blackbird saith.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN
1830-1897

Solitude

WHEN you have tidied all things for the
night,
And while your thoughts are fading to their sleep,
You'll pause a moment in the late firelight,
Too sorrowful to weep.

The large and gentle furniture has stood
In sympathetic silence all the day
With that old kindness of domestic wood;
Nevertheless the haunted room will say:
“Some one must be away.”

The little dog rolls over half awake,
Stretches his paws, yawns, looking up at you,
Wags his tail very slightly for your sake,
That you may feel he is unhappy too.

A distant engine whistles, or the floor
Creaks, or the wandering night-wind bangs a door.

H. MONRO ❖ J. MASEFIELD

Silence is scattered like a broken glass.
The minutes prick their ears and run about,
Then one by one subside again and pass
Sedately in, monotonously out.

You bend your head and wipe away a tear.
Solitude walks one heavy step more near.

HAROLD MONRO

Cargoes

QUINQUIREME of Nineveh from distant
Ophir

Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green
shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March
days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

JOHN MASEFIELD

Three Men of Gotham

SEAMEN three! What men be ye?
Gotham's three wise men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine.—
And your ballast is old wine.

Whó art thou, so fast adrift?
I am he they call Old Care.
Here on board we will thee lift.
No: I may not enter there.
Wherefore so? 'Tis Jove's decree,
In a bowl Care may not be.—
In a bowl Care may not be.

Fear ye not the waves that roll?
No: in charmed bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine.—
And your ballast is old wine.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

1785-1866

Ozymandias

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of
stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command

P. B. SHELLEY ❀ R. HERRICK

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless
things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
‘My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!’
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

The Mad Maid's Song

GOOD-MORROW to the day so fair,
Good-morning, sir, to you;
Good-morrow to mine own torn hair
Bedabbled with the dew.

Good-morning to this primrose too,
Good-morrow to each maid
That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
Wherein my love is laid.

Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me!
Alack and well-a-day!
For pity, sir, find out that bee
Which bore my love away.

I'll seek him in your bonnet brave,
I'll seek him in your eyes;
Nay, now I think they've made his grave
I' th' bed of strawberries.

R. HERRICK ❖ J. FREEMAN

I'll seek him there; I know ere this
The cold, cold earth doth shake him;
But I will go, or send a kiss
By you, sir, to awake him.

Pray hurt him not; though he be dead,
He knows well who do love him,
And who with green turfs rear his head,
And who do rudely move him.

He's soft and tender (pray take heed);
With bands of cowslips bind him,
And bring him home—but 'tis decreed
That I shall never find him!

ROBERT HERRICK

1591-1674

It Was The Lovely Moon

IT was the lovely moon—she lifted
Slowly her white brow among
Bronze cloud-waves that ebb'd and drifted
Faintly, faintlier afar.
Calm she looked, yet pale with wonder,
Sweet in unwonted thoughtfulness,
Watching the earth that dwindled under
Faintly, faintlier afar.
It was the lovely moon that lovelike
Hovered over the wandering, tired
Earth, her bosom grey and dovelike,
Hovering beautiful as a dove...
The lovely moon:—her soft light falling
Lightly on roof and poplar and pine—
Tree to tree whispering and calling,
Wonderful in the silvery shine
Of the round, lovely, thoughtful moon.

JOHN FREEMAN

W. J. TURNER

Romance

WHEN I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams.
I stood where Popocatapetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the Master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school—
Shining Popocatapetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away:

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower—
O shining Popocatapetl
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
They had stolen my soul away!

W. J. TURNER

Time, Real and Imaginary

AN ALLEGORY

ON the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery
place),
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
This far outstripp'd the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he pass'd,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772-1834

The Fairies

UP the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen;
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
If any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

1824-1889

Sonnet

THERE was an Indian, who had known no
change,
Who strayed content along a sunlit beach
Gathering shells. He heard a sudden strange
Commingled noise; looked up: and gasped for
speech.
For in the bay, where nothing was before,
Moved on the sea, by magic, huge canoes,
With bellying cloths on poles, and not one oar,
And fluttering coloured signs and clambering
crews.

And he, in fear, this naked man alone;
His fallen hands forgetting all their shells,
His lips gone pale, knelt low behind a stone,
And stared, and saw, and did not understand;
Columbus's doom-burdened caravels
Slant to the shore and all their seamen land.

J. C. SQUIRE

JOHN DAVIDSON

A Cinque Port

BELOW the down the stranded town
What may betide forlornly waits,
With memories of smoky skies,
When Gallic navies crossed the straits;
When waves with fire and blood grew bright,
And cannon thundered through the night.

With swinging stride the rhythmic tide
Bore to the harbour barque and stoop;
Across the bar the ship of war,
In castled stern and lanterned poop
Came up with conquests on her lee,
The stately mistress of the sea.

Where argosies have wooed the breeze,
The simple sheep are feeding now;
And near and far across the bar
The ploughman whistles at the plough;
Where once the long waves washed the shore,
Larks from their lowly lodgings soar.

Below the down the stranded town
Hears far away the rollers beat;
About the wall the seabirds call;
The salt wind murmurs through the street;
Forlorn the sea's forsaken bride
Awaits the end that shall betide.

JOHN DAVIDSON

1857-1909

MATTHEW ARNOLD

The Forsaken Merman

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shoreward blow;
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away.
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go.
Call once yet.
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain.
Surely she will come again.
Call her once and come away.
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay."
The wild white horses foam and fret.
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down.
Call no more.
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore
Then come down.
She will not come though you call all day.
Come away, come away.
Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?

MATTHEW ARNOLD

In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail, and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea;
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green
sea.
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with
thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves.
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-
caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the
bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the
bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd
town.

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was
still,

To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold-blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with
rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:

"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.

Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone.

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."

But, ah! she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book.

Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.

Come away, children, call no more.

Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down;

Down to the depths of the sea.

She sits at her wheel in the humming town;

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,

For the humming street, and the child with its toy.

For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.

For the wheel where I spun,

And the blessed light of the sun."

MATTHEW ARNOLD

And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaid,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children.
Come children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she:
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow;
When clear falls the moonlight;
When spring-tides are low:
When sweet airs come seaward

M. ARNOLD ❖ J. E. FLECKER

From heaths starr'd with broom;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom:
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she.
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

MATTHEW ARNOLD
1822-1888

The Golden Journey to Samarkand

PROLOGUE

WE who with songs beguile your pilgrimage
And swear that Beauty lives though lilies die,
We Poets of the proud old lineage
Who sing to find your hearts, we know not
why,—

What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,
And winds and shadows fall towards the West:

And there the world's first huge white-bearded
kings

In dim glades sleeping, murmur in their sleep,
And closer round their breasts the ivy clings,
Cutting its pathway slow and red and deep.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

II

And how beguile you? Death has no repose
Warmer and deeper than that Orient sand
Which hides the beauty and bright faith of those
Who made the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

And now they wait and whiten peaceably,
Those conquerors, those poets, those so fair:
They know time comes, not only you and I,
But the whole world shall whiten, here or there;

When those long caravans that cross the plain
With dauntless feet and sound of silver bells
Put forth no more for glory or for gain,
Take no more solace from the palm-girt wells.

When the great markets by the sea shut fast
All that calm Sunday that goes on and on:
When even lovers find their peace at last,
And Earth is but a star, that once had shone.

EPILOGUE

At the Gate of the Sun, Bagdad, in olden time

THE MERCHANTS (*together*)

Away, for we are ready to a man!
Our camels sniff the evening and are glad.
Lead on, O Master of the Caravan:
Lead on the Merchant-Princes of Bagdad.

THE CHIEF DRAPER

Have we not Indian carpets dark as wine,
Turbans and sashes, gowns and bows and veils,
And broideries of intricate design,
And printed hangings in enormous bales?

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

THE CHIEF GROCER

We have rose-candy, we have spikenard,
Mastic and terebinth and oil and spice,
And such sweet jams meticulously jarred
As God's own Prophet eats in Paradise.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

And we have manuscripts in peacock styles
By Ali of Damascus; we have swords
Engraved with storks and apes and crocodiles,
And heavy beaten necklaces, for Lords.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN

But you are nothing but a lot of Jews.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

Sir, even dogs have daylight, and we pay.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN

But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes,
You dirty-bearded, blocking up the way?

THE PILGRIMS

We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go
Always a little further: it may be
Beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow,
Across that angry or that glimmering sea,
White on a throne or guarded in a cave
There lives a prophet who can understand
Why men were born: but surely we are brave,
Who make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

THE CHIEF MERCHANT

We gnaw the nail of hurry. Master, away!

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

ONE OF THE WOMEN

O turn your eyes to where your children stand.
Is not Bagdad the beautiful? O stay!

THE MERCHANTS (*in chorus*)

We take the Golden Road to Samarkand.

AN OLD MAN

Have you not girls and garlands in your home?
Eunuchs and Syrian boys at your command?
Seek not excess: God hateth him who roams!

THE MERCHANTS (*in chorus*)

We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

A PILGRIM WITH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE

Sweet to ride forth at evening from the wells
When shadows pass gigantic on the sand,
And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand.

A MERCHANT

We travel not for trafficking alone:
By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned;
For lust of knowing what should not be known
We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN

Open the gate, O watchman of the night!

THE WATCHMAN

Ho, travellers, I open. For what land
Leave you the dim-moon city of delight?

THE MERCHANTS (*with a shout*)

We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

[The Caravan passes through the gate.]

J. E. FLECKER ❖ J. KEATS

THE WATCHMAN (*consoling the women*)

What would ye, ladies? It was ever thus.
Men are unwise and curiously planned.

A WOMAN

They have their dreams, and do not think of us.

VOICES OF THE CARAVAN (*in the distance, singing*)

We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand!

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

1884-1915

La Belle Dame sans Merci ✓

“O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and pally-lodged?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

“O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's hoary is fall,
And the harvest's done.

“I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.”

“I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

“I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

JOHN KEATS

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true!'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cried—'La belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

The Lotos-Eaters

“**C**OURAGE!” he said, and pointed toward
the land,

“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward
soon.”

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery
drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven
copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then came one said, "We will return no more;"
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

1809-1892

Song of the Lotos-Eaters

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentler on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in
sleep.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of
things?

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
'The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
'The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
'The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dream-
ful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of
brass!

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the
pine.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the
surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal
mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are
hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleam-
ing world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted
lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a
doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are
strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave
the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis
whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil,
the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar;
O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
1809-1892

JOHN DRINKWATER

Mamble

I NEVER went to Mamble
That lies above the Teme,
So I wonder who's in Mamble,
And whether people seem
Who breed and brew along there
As lazy as the name,
And whether any song there
Sets alehouse wits aflame.

The finger-post says Mamble,
And that is all I know
Of the narrow road to Mamble,
And should I turn and go
To that place of lazy token;
That lies above the Teme,
There might be a Mamble broken
That was lissom in a dream.

So leave the road to Mamble
And take another road
To as good a place as Mamble
Be it lazy as a toad;
Who travels Worcester county
Takes any place that comes
When April tosses bounty
To the cherries and the plums.

JOHN DRINKWATER

ROBERT BRIDGES

A Passer-by

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails
crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou
knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air:
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare:
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-
capp'd grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms, more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately and still thou
standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhail'd and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blame-
less,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is
thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails
crowding.

ROBERT BRIDGES

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The Cloud

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rock'd to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.
I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.
The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning-star shines dead.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit,
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea
beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high;
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and
swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch, through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,

P. B. SHELLEY ❀ R. L. STEVENSON

When the powers of the air are chain'd to my
chair,

Is the million-coloured bow;

The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,

And the nursling of the sky;

I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;

I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain, when with never a stain,

The pavilion of heaven is bare,

And the winds and sunbeams with their convex
gleams,

Build up the blue dome of air,

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,

And out of the caverns of rain,

Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the
tomb,

I arise and unbuild it again.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

Romance

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your
delight

Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.

I will make a palace fit for you and me,

Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your
room,

Where white flows the river and bright blows the
broom,

And you shall wash your linen and keep your body
white

In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

R. L. STEVENSON ❁ TENNYSON

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside
fire.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850-1894

Mariana

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarlèd bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away;
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

TENNYSON ❀ E. THOMAS

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices call'd her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary;
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
1809-1892

Lights Out

I HAVE come to the borders of sleep;
The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose
Their way, however straight,
Or winding, soon or late;
They cannot choose.

E. THOMAS ❖ ANON

Many a road and track
That, since the dawn's first crack,
Up to the forest brink,
Deceived the travellers
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.

Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends,
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter,
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter and leave alone
I know not how.

The tall forest towers;
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf;
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

EDWARD THOMAS
1877-1917

Two Rivers

SAYS Tweed to Till—
“What gars ye rin sae still?”
Says Till to Tweed—
“Though ye rin with speed
And I rin slaw,
For ae man that ye droon
I droon twa.”

ANON, 17TH CENTURY

PART II

The Buzzards

WHEN evening came and the warm glow
grew deeper,

And every tree that bordered the green
meadows

And in the yellow cornfields every reaper
And every corn-shock stood above their shadows
Flung eastward from their feet in longer measure,
Serenely far there swam in the sunny height
A buzzard and his mate who took their pleasure
Swirling and poising idly in golden light.

On great pied motionless moth-wings borne along,
So effortless and so strong,

Cutting each other's paths together they glided,
Then wheeled asunder till they soared divided
Two valleys' width (as though it were delight
To part like this, being sure they could unite
So swiftly in their empty, free dominion),
Curved headlong downward, towered up the sunny
steep,

Then, with a sudden lift of the one great pinion,
Swung proudly to a curve, and from its height
Took half a mile of sunlight in one long sweep.

And we, so small on the swift immense hillside,
Stood tranced, until our souls arose uplifted

On those far-sweeping, wide,
Strong curves of flight—swayed up and hugely
drifted,

Were washed, made strong and beautiful in the
tide

M. ARMSTRONG ❁ A. COWLEY

Of sun-bathed air. But far beneath, beholden
Through shining deeps of air, the fields were
golden
And rosy burned the heather where cornfields
ended.

And still those buzzards whirled, while light with-
drew

Out of the vales and to surging slopes ascended,
Till the loftiest flaming summit died to blue.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

Drinking

THE thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks and gapes for drink again;
The plants suck in the earth, and are
With constant drinking fresh and fair;
The sea itself, which one would think
Should have but little need of drink,
Drinks ten thousand rivers up,
So fill'd that they o'erflow the cup.
The busy Sun (and one would guess
By 's drunken fiery face no less)
Drinks up the sea, and when h'as done,
The Moon and Stars drink up the Sun:
They drink and dance by their own light,
They drink and revel all the night:
Nothing in Nature's sober found,
But an eternal health goes round.
Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,
Fill all the glasses there—for why
Should every creature drink but I,
Why, man of morals, tell me why?

ABRAHAM COWLEY

1618-1667

WILLIAM COWPER

Epitaph on a Hare

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiny, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

W. COWPER ❀ W. WORDSWORTH

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now, beneath this walnut shade,
He finds his long, last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,
From which no care can save,
And partner once of Tiny's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

Daffodils

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

W. WORDSWORTH ❁ R. BROOKE

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850

The Fish

IN a cool curving world he lies
And ripples with dark ecstasies.
The kind luxurious lapse and steal
Shapes all his universe to feel
And know and be; the clinging stream
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides
Superb on unreturning tides.
Those silent waters weave for him
A fluctuant mutable world and dim,
Where wavering masses bulge and gape
Mysterious, and shape to shape
Dies momentarily through whorl and hollow,
And form and line and solid follow
Solid and line and form to dream
Fantastic down the eternal stream;
An obscure world, a shifting world,
Bulbous, or pulled to thin, or curled,

RUPERT BROOKE

Or serpentine, or driving arrows,
Or serene slidings, or March narrows.
There slipping wave and shore are one,
And weed and mud. No ray of sun,
But glow to glow fades down the deep
(As dream to unknown dream in sleep);
Shaken translucency illumines
The hyaline of drifting glooms;
The strange soft-handed depth subdues
Drowned colour there, but black to hues,
As death to living, decomposes—
Red darkness of the heart of roses,
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,
And gold that lies behind the eyes,
The unknown unnameable sightless white
That is the essential flame of night,
Lustreless purple, hooded green,
The myriad hues that lie between
Darkness and darkness!...

And all's one,
Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,
The world he rests in, world he knows,
Perpetual curving. Only—grows
An eddy in that ordered falling,
A knowledge from the gloom, a calling,
Weed in the wave, gleam in the mud—
The dark fire leaps along his blood;
Dateless and deathless, blind and still,
The intricate impulse works its will;
His woven world drops back; and he,
Sans providence, sans memory,
Unconscious and directly driven,
Fades to some dank sufficient heaven.

O world of lips, O world of laughter,
Where hope is fleet and thought flies after,

R. BROOKE * R. BURNS

Of lights in the clear night, of cries
That drift along the wave and rise
Thin to the glittering stars above,
You know the hands, the eyes of love!
The strife of limbs, the sightless clinging,
The infinite distance, and the singing
Blown by the wind, a flame of sound,
The gleam, the flowers, and vast around
The horizon, and the heights above—
You know the sigh, the song of love!

· But there the night is close, and there
Darkness is cold and strange and bare;
And the secret deeps are whisperless;
And rhythm is all deliciousness;
And joy is in the throbbing tide,
Whose intricate fingers beat and glide
In felt bewildering harmonies
Of trembling touch; and music is
The exquisite knocking of the blood.
Space is no more, under the mud;
His bliss is older than the sun.
Silent and straight the waters run.
The lights, the cries, the willows dim,
And the dark tide are one with him.

RUPERT BROOKE

1887-1915

To a Mouse

WEE, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou needna start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

ROBERT BURNS

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
And fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
And naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
And bleak December's winds ensuin'
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin' fast,
And cosie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out for a' thy trouble,
But house or hauld,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:

R. BURNS ❀ W. WORDSWORTH

The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
And forward, though I canna see,
I guess and fear!

Brattle = scurry; *pattle* = plough-staff; *daimen-icker* = an occasional ear of corn; *thraws* = a number of shocks; *big* = build; *snell* = bitter; *thole* = to suffer; *cranreuch* = hoar-frost.

ROBERT BURNS
1759-1796

The Solitary Reaper

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

W. WORDSWORTH ❖ J. KEATS

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listen'd, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850

To Autumn

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy
cells.

J. KEATS ❀ J. MASEFIELD

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy
hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined
flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.
Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

Twilight

TWILIGHT it is, and the far woods are dim,
and the rooks cry and call.
Down in the valley the lamps, and the mist, and a
star over all,
There by the rick, where they thresh, is the drone
at an end,
Twilight it is, and I travel the road with my friend.

J. MASEFIELD ❁ P. B. SHELLEY

I think of the friends who are dead, who were dear
long ago in the past,
Beautiful friends who are dead, though I know
that death cannot last;
Friends with the beautiful eyes that the dust has
defiled,
Beautiful souls who were gentle when I was a child.

JOHN MASEFIELD

Night

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,—
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey;
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out.
Then wander o'er city and sea and land;
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sigh'd for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone;
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turn'd to her rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sigh'd for thee.

P. B. SHELLEY ❀ H. TRENCH

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 "Wouldst thou me?"
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmur'd like a noontide bee,
"Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?"—And I replied,
 "No, not thee!"

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled.
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

O Dreamy, Gloomy, Friendly Trees!

O DREAMY, gloomy, friendly Trees,
I came along your narrow track
To bring my gifts unto your knees
And gifts did you give back;
For when I brought this heart that burns—
 These thoughts that bitterly repine—
And laid them here among the ferns
And the hum of boughs divine,
Ye, vastest breathers of the air,
Shook down with slow and mighty poise
Your coolness on the human care,
Your wonder on its toys,
Your greenness on the heart's despair,
Your darkness on its noise.

HERBERT TRENCH

JOHN KEATS

Ode on a Grecian Urn

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens
loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

I heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy
bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

J. KEATS ❁ P. B. SHELLEY

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

To a Skylark

HALL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert—
That from heaven or near it
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

In the golden light'ning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight—

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is
overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody;—

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her
bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its ærial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from
the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-
wing'd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass;
Rain-awaken'd flowers—
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh—thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine,

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Match'd with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of
pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest
thought.

Yet, if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know;
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening
now.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

Ode to the West Wind

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's
being,
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill;

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's com-
motion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and
ocean,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Angels of rain and lightning! there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: O hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baïæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day;
All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! if even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision—I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
O! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own?
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Philomela

HARK! ah, the Nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!
O Wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world
pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?
Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb Sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor Fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the
leaves!
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal Passion!
Eternal Pain!

MATTHEW ARNOLD
1822-1888

JOHN KEATS

Ode to a Nightingale

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk;
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South!
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainèd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and
dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

JOHN KEATS

Away! away! for I will fly to thee;
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:

J. KEATS ❁ R. L. STEVENSON

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for
home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oftentimes hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?

JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

The House Beautiful

*A NAKED house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,
A garden bare of flowers and fruit
And poplars at the garden foot:
Such is the place that I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.*

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,

R. L. STEVENSON ❁ G. HERBERT

Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end
Of day's declining splendour; here
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbour hollows dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands,
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
1850-1894

Virtue

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
The bridal of the earth and sky—
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

G. HERBERT ❖ A. MARVELL

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

GEORGE HERBERT

1593-1633

A Garden

Written after the Civil Wars

SEE how the flowers, as at parade,
Under their colours stand display'd:
Each regiment in order grows,
That of the tulip, pink, and rose.
But when the vigilant patrol
Of stars walks round about the pole,
Their leaves, that to the stalks are curl'd,
Seem to their staves the ensigns furl'd.
Then in some flower's beloved hut
Each bee, as sentinel, is shut,
And sleeps so too; but if once stirr'd,
She runs you through, nor asks the word.
O thou, that dear and happy Isle,
The garden of the world erewhile,
Thou Paradise of the four seas
Which Heaven planted us to please,
But, to exclude the world, did guard
With wat'ry if not flaming sword;
What luckless apple did we taste
To make us mortal and thee waste!

A. MARVELL ❖ L. JOHNSON

Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet militia restore,
When gardens only had their towers,
And all the garrisons were flowers;
When roses only arms might bear,
And men did rosy garlands wear?

ANDREW MARVELL

1621-1678

*By the Statue of King Charles
at Charing Cross*

SOMBRE and rich, the skies;
Great glooms, and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me: and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall:
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court; and yet;
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing

LIONEL JOHNSON

Which are more full of fate:
The stars; or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows; or the dark skies?
Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy:
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life and hapless? Nay:
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea:
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom:
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ:
His soul was of the saints;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet when the city sleeps;
When all the cries are still:
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

LIONEL JOHNSON

1867-1902

The Dromedary

I N dreams I see the Dromedary still,
As once in a gay park I saw him stand:
A thousand eyes in vulgar wonder scanned
His humps and hairy neck, and gazed their fill
At his lank shanks and mocked with laughter shrill.
He never moved: and if his Eastern land
Flashed on his eye with stretches of hot sand,
It wrung no mute appeal from his proud will.
He blinked upon the rabble lazily;
And still some trace of majesty forlorn
And a coarse grace remained: his head was high,
Though his gaunt flanks with a great mange
were worn:
There was not any yearning in his eye,
But on his lips and nostril infinite scorn.

A. Y. CAMPBELL

What the Bullet sang

O JOY of creation,
To be!
O rapture, to fly
And be free!
Be the battle lost or won,
Though its smoke shall hide the sun;
I shall find my love—the one
Born for me!

I shall know him where he stands
All alone,
With the power in his hands
Not o'erthrown;

B. HARTE ❖ W. OLDYS

I shall know him by his face,
By his godlike front and grace;
I shall hold him for a space
All my own!

It is he—O my love!
So bold!

It is I—all thy love
Foretold!

It is I—O love, what bliss!
Dost thou answer to my kiss?
O sweetheart! what is this
Lieth there so cold?

BRET HARTE
1839-1902

On a Fly drinking out of his Cup

BUSY, curious, thirsty fly!
Drink with me and drink as I:
Freely welcome to my cup,
Couldst thou sip and sip it up:
Make the most of life you may,
Life is short and wears away.

Both alike are mine and thine
Hastening quick to their decline:
Thine's a summer, mine's no more,
Though repeated to threescore.
Threescore summers, when they're gone,
Will appear as short as one!

WILLIAM OLDYS
1696-1761

EDWARD SHANKS

The Swimmers

THE cove 's a shining plate of blue and green,
With darker belts between
The trough and crest of the lazily rising swell,
And the great rocks throw purple shadows down
Where transient sun-sparks wink and burst and
drown,
And the distant glimmering floor of pebble and shell
Is bright or hidden as the shadow wavers,
And everywhere the restless sun-steeped air
Trembles and quavers,
As though it were
More saturate with light than it could bear.

Now come the swimmers from slow-dripping
caves,
Where the shy fern creeps under the veined roof,
And wading out meet with glad breast the waves.
One holds aloof,
And climbs alone the reef with shrinking feet
That scarce endure the jagged stone's dull heat,
Till on the edge he poises
And flies towards the water, vanishing
In wreaths of white, with echoing liquid noises,
And swims beneath, a vague, distorted thing.

Now all the other swimmers leave behind
The crystal shallow and the foam-wet shore
And sliding into deeper water find
A living coolness in the lifting flood:
Then through their bodies leaps the sparkling
blood,
So that they feel the faint earth's drought no more.
There now they float, heads raised above the green,
White bodies cloudily seen,

E. SHANKS ❀ H. MONRO

Further and further from the brazen rock
On which the hot air shakes, on which the tide
Vainly throws with soundless shock
The cool and lagging wave. Out, out they go,
And now upon a mirrored cloud they ride
Or turning over, with soft strokes and slow,
Slide on like shadows in a tranquil sky.
Behind them, on the tall parched cliff, the dry
And dusty grasses grow
In shallow ledges of the arid stone,
Starving for coolness and the touch of rain.
But, though to earth they must return again,
Here come the soft sea-air to meet them, blown
Over the surface of the outer deep,
Scarce moving, staying, falling, straying, gone,
Light and delightful as the touch of sleep...
One wakes and splashes round,
And magically all the others wake
From their sea-dream, and now with rippling sound
Their arms the silence break.
And now again the crystal shallows take
The dripping bodies whose cool hour is done.
They pause upon the beach, they pause and sigh,
Then vanish in the caverns one by one.

Soon the wet footmarks on the stones are dry:
The cove sleeps on beneath the unwavering sun.

EDWARD SHANKS

Milk for the Cat

WHEN the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with
care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

HAROLD MONRO

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be
sour,

She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing, trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk:

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long dim ecstasy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last half drop,
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

HAROLD MONRO

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

His Lady's Cruelty

WITH how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st
the skies!

How silently, and with how wan a face!

What! may it be that even in heavenly place

That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?

Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes

Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:

I read it in thy looks; thy languish'd grace

To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.

Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,

Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?

Are beauties there as proud as here they be?

Do they above love to be loved, and yet

Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?

Do they call "virtue" there—ungratefulness?

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

1554-1586

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Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Says Tweed to Till
Seamen three! What men be ye?
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness! . . . .	.	.	.	.
See how the flowers, as at parade . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Softly along the road of evening . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Sombre and rich, the skies . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Sometimes the ghosts forgotten go . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright! . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Swiftly walk over the western wave . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Tenderly, day that I have loved, I close your eyes .	.	.	.	.
The cleanly rush of the mountain air . . . . .	.	.	.	.
The cove's a shining plate of blue and green . . .	.	.	.	.
There is sweet music here that softer falls . . . .	.	.	.	.
There was an Indian, who had known no change . .	.	.	.	.
The thirsty earth soaks up the rain . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Three jolly Farmers . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Time, you old gipsy man . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Twilight it is, and the far woods are dim . . . .	.	.	.	.
Up the airy mountain . . . . .	.	.	.	.
Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie . . . . .	.	.	.	.
We who with songs beguile your pilgrimage . . . .	.	.	.	.
When evening came and the warm glow grew deeper .	.	.	.	.
When I was but thirteen or so . . . . .	.	.	.	.
When the tea is brought at five o'clock . . . . .	.	.	.	.
When you have tidied all things for the night . . .	.	.	.	.
Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding .	.	.	.	.
Who said "Peacock Pie"? . . . . .	.	.	.	.
With blackest moss the flower-plots . . . . .	.	.	.	.
With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies	.	.	.	.

